

**COMMITTEE ALERT**

**H. 4271 / S. 1525 – An Act protecting children from harmful diet pills and muscle-building supplements**

**SUPPORT**

The Strategic Training Initiative for the Prevention of Eating Disorders (STRIPED) and our coalition of 21 community organizations write in strong support of H.2215/S.1465, *An Act protecting children from harmful diet pills and muscle-building supplements*.

We support the bill for the following reasons:

**Our youth are at risk.**

Eating disorders cases are skyrocketing because of the pandemic. Children’s hospitals in Massachusetts and the country are seeing two-to-threefold increases in adolescents seeking treatment for an eating disorder and emergency room visitations due to the COVID-19.<sup>1,2</sup>

Over-the-counter diet pills and weight-loss and muscle-building supplements are linked with onset of eating disorders. Young women who use over-the-counter diet pills are 4-6 times more likely than peers to be diagnosed with an eating disorders within 5 years.<sup>3,4</sup> Young men who use muscle-building supplements are 3 times more likely than peers to start using illicit anabolic steroids within several years.<sup>5,6</sup> An estimated 607,584 Massachusetts residents will have an eating disorder in their lifetime.<sup>7</sup>

**Dangerous products.**

Dietary supplements sold for weight loss and muscle building have been found to be laced with illegal substances such as steroids<sup>8</sup> and prescription pharmaceuticals.<sup>9</sup> These products are linked to serious health risks including organ failure,<sup>10</sup> testicular cancer,<sup>11</sup> and even death.<sup>12</sup> The American Academy of Pediatrics has released reports strongly cautioning against teens using these products.<sup>13, 14</sup>

**Insufficient regulation of dietary supplements by the FDA.**

Under the Dietary Supplement Health and Education Act of 1994 (DSHEA Act), the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) does not have the authority to require rigorous proof of safety or efficacy prior to the sale of these products.<sup>15</sup> One recent study found that two-thirds recalled supplements still contained illegal ingredients six months after FDA recalls.<sup>16</sup> To protect children from these dangerous products, policy intervention is urgently needed at the state level.

Prohibiting the sale of these dangerously underregulated products is critical to protecting the health and safety of Massachusetts's children.

**Our coalition urges your support for H.2215/S.1465!**



# An Act protecting children from harmful diet pills and muscle-building supplements

## References

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